

Beat: Health

New Cancer Therapy Destroys Ovarian and Colorectal Tumors Quickly

Clinical Trials Expected To Begin

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USPA NEWS - Clinical trials are expected to begin in the next few months, after results on mice were described as “very exciting” with a new cancer therapy that has completely destroyed advanced ovarian and bowel tumors in just six days.

Pinhead-sized drug ‘factories’ are delivered to give continuous, high bursts of a protein that boosts the immune system. “We just administer once, but they keep making the dose every day, where it’s needed until the cancer is eliminated,” said co-author Dr. Omid Veisheh, of Rice University in Houston, Texas, whose family friend died of the deadly disease. “Once we determined the correct dose, how many factories we needed, we were able to eradicate tumors in 100% of animals with ovarian cancer and in seven of eight animals with colorectal cancer.”

The tiny beads have a protective shell containing cells engineered to produce interleukin-2. They could be used to fight the most lethal cancers, including those of the pancreas, liver and lungs. They can be implanted with minimally invasive surgery, and could be tested on human patients by autumn, so they can get them into hospitals as quickly as possible. Interleukin-2 is a cytokine, a protein the immune system uses to recognize and fight disease, which has been approved as a cancer treatment by the US Food and Drug Administration. The bead’s outer shell shields its cytokine-producing cells from immune attacks, as they are made of materials the immune system recognizes as foreign objects, but not as immediate threats.

In the research, published in the peer-reviewed journal, Science Advances, they also showed they could safely administer a second course of treatment should it become necessary in the clinic. Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers, while ovarian is particularly lethal because it is usually only diagnosed in the late stages. Avenge Bio, a Massachusetts-based startup co-founded by Dr. Veisheh, has licensed the cytokine-factory technology from Rice University.

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